

GUIDE TO THE SP9 CARAJA FILE

[The Caraja are an ethnic group located along Brazil's Araguaya River, with their territory centering on the Island of Bananal (8°-17° S. Lat. x 48°-52° W. Long.). This ethnic group is composed of three major "tribal" divisions - the Caraja proper, the Javahe, and the nearly extinct Shambioa (1: Lipkind p. 179). The Caraja proper were further subdivided into two territorial groups or "hordes" distributed north and south of Bananal (cf. 5: Krause). The "tribal" divisions manifest only slight dialectical differences, but somewhat greater variations in degree of acculturation and perhaps in certain aspects of social organization. Greenberg classifies their language as a separate stock within the Ge-Pano-Carib phylum. Fish is the most important source of food, and there is a somewhat distinctive, although still inadequately analyzed system of double descent, with matrilineages being the crucial descent groups.

The file consists of nine sources, including three translations from the German and one from the French. Six of these sources are by professional anthropologists. The professional literature divides into two broad groupings from the standpoint of time periods. The first period, which includes the most substantial accounts, centers around the turn of the century. These accounts are mostly the work of German ethnologists, and reflect their particular orientation in that the Caraja data were gathered in the course of ethnographic surveys of extended geographic areas, and emphasis is placed upon the description of material culture items collected in the field for museum purposes. 4: Ehrenreich (1891) seems to be the earliest important study, while 5: Krause (1911) remains the major general ethnography, as well as presenting a fairly thorough

review of the historical literature. Both sources include extensive data on population and settlement patterns and the subsistence economy. 5: Krause is supplemented by 2: Krause, which contains a detailed, illustrated description of Caraja art in both its plastic and decorative forms. A good, complementary work is 6: Cook (1909), a missionary account which, although superficial in many respects and drawing in part from 1: Ehrenreich, incorporates many fresh and useful observations.

No other work of basic significance appears until the publication of 1: Lipkind in 1948, which marks the beginning of our second period. This is a comprehensive cultural summary based largely upon Lipkind's own field work in 1937. It is supplemented by 7: Lipkind, a brief description of Caraja cosmography. The next and most recent key source is 3: Dietschy, based upon field work in 1954-55, but only published in 1963. Dietschy presents a Caraja cultural profile in terms of the categories used by Murdock in his "World Ethnographic Sample" (1957), emphasizing particularly the kinship system since this is the aspect most poorly covered in the previous literature. This is a valuable but much too brief article.

The file is completed by two very short papers, 8: and 9: Gow-Smith (both published in 1925), dealing respectively with a dance ceremony and a few items of material culture.

Because the Caraja are one of the more accessible and colorful Indian groups - with their lip and ear plugs, many photographers and movie-makers have used them as a background, and there exist numerous popular travel accounts. These works are generally very superficial and misleading and have not, therefore, been included in the file.

As it now stands, the Caraja file covers fairly well the general range of cultural topics, but quantitatively it is heavily weighted in the direction of material culture - and even here the emphasis is upon ornamentation and art products rather than basic technology. There are a number of major weaknesses, the most serious of which are: (1) poor coverage of social organization, and (2) an almost complete lack of concrete, behavioral data. In the case of our early major authorities, Ehrenreich and Krause, this is probably due both to their orientation and to the relatively short period of time they spent in the field - Ehrenreich seems to have spent only about two months among the Caraja in 1888, and Krause about five months in 1908. Perhaps this situation will be corrected by further publications from our modern authorities, Lipkind and Dietschy, since as yet they have published only minor portions of their field data.

The relevant source pages have been subheaded for Javahe or Shambioa where the data refer specifically to these divisions. The huts where the masked dance costumes are made and stored have been marked for category 346, and the masked dance ceremonies for category 535, since the sacred or religious character of these phenomena is generally not specified in the sources. Also, the clay figurines or "dolls" have been marked for category 532, because it is usually not clear whether they are used as children's toys.]

Processed in 1965-1966.